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DUTY OF THE STATE

TOWARDS

THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

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BY

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ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN.

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THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

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As a portion of the press of our state, the moulder and director of public opinion, and members of the medical profession have used every opportunity during the last ten years, not to question, but to condemn the right of the state to teach medicine, it seems both proper and opportune that on an occasion like this a word should be spoken in defense of the very existence of our alma mater. These attacks have been sustained with such persistency, and ingenious force of argument, that many have come to regard the statement, that under our forms of government, the state has no right to teach medicine, as a political axiom, and its practical adoption as simply a question of time. It therefore suffices no longer to meet them with the confident assertion that the existence of this school is assured by the organic law of the state, for constitutions are only safe as long as they are in accord with the progressive thought of the majority of the commonwealth; these attacks must be met and conquered in the arena of thought, if our alma mater is to continue undisturbed in her hitherto bright career of honest work for the good of the people, and the advancement of medical science.

It would lead beyond the scope of this paper to attempt an

exhaustive refutation of all the arguments advanced in favor of this non-interference doctrine of the state in medical education, as based on the ground of being foreign and detrimental to the spirit and tendencies of our democratic forms of government. As much of the argument partakes strongly of that sentimental style of reasoning, so common in the United States, which regards every new departure as an infringement of the liberties guaranteed by the constitution, it may not be out of place to meet this argument in a general way, by tracing the historic growths of constitutions and statute laws.

The constitutional law, as well as the statute laws of a state or government, will always reflect the garnered wisdom of the people, gathered from the experience of the ages, and culled from every source. In the centuries of the historic past, history records this prominent fact of the generations and empires as they succeeded one another in the upward strides of civilization, that the successor generally adopted those laws and regulations of the predecessor, which had been found most expedient in regulating the varied relations of the subject and his vocation towards the state, and the community, modifying and improving as occasion demanded. Without this predominent tendency of immitation, adaptation, and subsequent improvement of government, the upward strides of our civilization would indeed have been less frequent and of inferior dimensions.

It is a well established truth that the law must keep abreast with those varied complexions of relations resulting from increase of population, and accumulation of wealth, if the state is to continue to protect the citizen in the possession of those rights and privileges, for the very maintainance of which the state herself was inaugurated. A state which regards her constitution and statute laws as complete and unalterable cannot in the course of time protect her citizen in the possession of those very rights which she guarantees, for new dangers, incident to, and inseparable from the battle of life, as population increases, are constantly assuming gigantic proportions if unrecognized by law.

When our government was established the population was small, and the extent of country vast and unexplored. A foreign ruler has been cast aside on account of his oppressions, and the people felt that buoyant confidence of youth in managing their institutions according to their needs, without the interference of government. That, under these circumstances the regulation of the varied internal relations of the people in their avocations was left to the unconscious growth of human necessity, is obvious. The citizen was anxiously jealous of his personal liberties, and would jealously oppose any measure which presented any conceivable ground of alarm for those principles for which he had so freely offered his life-blood on

many a hard fought field. It is an historical fact, that Alexander Hamilton met great organized opposition in Pennsylvania, when he attempted to raise the first federal revenue by imposing and collecting a tax on the distillation of spirits. In those days the general government, as well as the state legislatures had but little control in the regulation of internal affairs;—the function of government was chiefly restricted towards protecting the life and liberty of the subject from foreign foes.

Times have changed since then. The general government has naturally, and rightfully, assumed sovereign control over the states, and the states, in turn, have assumed supreme control in regulating by statute law nearly every industrial vocation, which has grown beyond local demands.

Had Patrick Henry, with all his burning eloquence, foreshadowed such consequences in the continental congress, when the representatives of the states, in constitutional convention, were shaping and framing our constitution, it is extremely doubtful if this government would have come into existence! And yet all these vast changes have been wrought without infringing the liberty guaranteed by that constitution. The liberty of the subject has not been infringed, but his protection ever widened by these gradual restrictions of previously uncontrolled vocations.

These laws in their aggregate represent no more and no less than the applied wisdom of our age. They are the pruning process of our time on the tree of civilization, destroying the rank growths, and directing those sprouts potent with future harvests in proper direction, in short, they represent the high-water mark of our generation in the upward strides of civilization.

That, but little has hitherto been done towards regulating by law the practice of medicine and surgery, must be ascribed to that so generally prevalent idea, that all such medicinal laws are potent with dangers to the citizen, the result, perchance, of a general misunderstanding of the true relation of the physician and surgeon to the general public. Present indications, however, render ample assurance that the public is fast becoming reconciled to a new departure in medical affairs.

The medical bill, at present under consideration by our legislature, is a wise step in the right direction; so far this bill has been endorsed by the profession, and the press has rendered quiet consent. May its safe delivery be accomplished.

With these preliminary considerations, which have a general bearing on the subject under consideration established; I propose to meet the press, and a hostile portion of the profession, on their lines of attack on this department of the university, namely, that it represents an act of class favoritism, and it is detrimental to the best interests of the medical profession, and so detrimental to the general good.

When admitting the doctrine that under our forms of gov-

ernment, the general government, as well as the individual states have no right to bestow a pecuniary favor without receiving full value in return on any individual, industry, or commercial or professional institute, I am, to the best of my knowledge, admitting all that can possible be declared as class favoritism, as wrong in principle, and detrimental to the spirit of our institutions.

Standing on this admitted ground, the press charges that the state is here bestowing a pecuniary consideration on individuals without receiving value in return, for the doctor is paid for his services, and that the state could with equal right engage in teaching all trades, industries, etc.

On considering the relation of all the manifold industries, trades, etc., to the general public, the following factor comes into bold relief. The government by granting a patent on all new inventions, and improvements, stimulates the inventive genius towards exerting his full strength, and protects him in his natural rights. By the rights and privileges of this patent, the inventor and his profession receive full value for all the advantages offered to the public for every invention and improvement. The vast sums which have flown into the coffers of inventors of generally employed articles of usefulness or necessity, render most assuredly, ample evidence that all possible claims are paid, and therefore, I cannot possibly conceive the right of any industry, trade, or profession, which is protected by patent in its inventions, and improvements, to claim any further assistance or protection from government. From the time that the apprentice enters his master's workshop he receives full pecuniary remuneration for his labor; he is paid for learning a profession in which every step of progress means revenue increased.

That the patent is amply sufficient to stimulate and enlist the inventive genius is demonstrated in every sphere of activity. Compare any industry of to-day with its predecessor of even twenty years, and you behold the grand march of thought in its every sphere of activity.

The great difference which exists between the relation of the medical profession to the general public, and that of all other professions, trades, industries, etc., is so generally overlooked, that it is at the risk of seeming arrogant that one can call attention thereto.

The practitioner enters the home and the workshop of man to study, and remove, if possible, the local causes of disease. The trained investigators of the profession are constantly engaged in prosecuting the difficult and often dangerous work of investigating the causes of infectious and contagious disease, and its mode of spreading. This vast field of investigation is so vigorously prosecuted in all parts of the civilized world, that the literature fairly teems with bacteria, baccilli, micrococci,

etc., as the causes and carriers of disease, the rank exuberance of which will be duly corrected by the control experiments of the critics. The scientist and the practitioner meet in sanitary conventions all over the land, local and national in character, to prosecute sanitary science collectively. The medical profession has primarily advocated the establishment of boards of health, and is yet constantly calling for these boards where there are none. In most civilized lands these boards are now a factor of vast importance in preventing and restricting epidemic disease. These boards have been endowed with an authority rendering them autocratic in character, and withal, their weapons consist of the mild, persuasive argument of a positive knowledge of the causes and modes of spreading of diseases. All these forces are factors in state medicine; and the progress made in this field since the immortal discovery of Jenner to the inductive innoculations of Pasteur, and the resplendent achievements of Koch, would form a theme in itself far beyond the scope of this paper. Yet, what reward does the investigator receive for his labors so often performed amidst dangers as great as those of the battlefield? No patent with its rewards awaits him. If his results have successfully passed the exacting scrutiny of the control experiments of hundreds of critics, he is generously accorded the fame of priority, and free from pecuniary consideration, the community reaps the direct benefits resulting from his discovery in the field of preventative medicine, and his profession is so much the loser in profitable practice.

When trades and industries meet in council, the subjects discussed pertain to the means of best promoting trade. I have yet to hear of any such association discussing the subject of restricting trade, unless for concocting a corner.

These thoughts may seem harsh in this hall, where medical science is taught for science's sake, but nevertheless it is necessary to reach the bottom of an abscess in order to restore healthy tissue in place of the foul gangrenous sore.

Preventative medicine, with its pernicious results on practice, forms, however, but a small fraction of the work performed by the profession in the study of diseases and their treatment, every progressive step of which results in direct benefit to the public. As an illustration of the extent of benefit arising to the public from the progress in the treatment of individual diseases, I briefly refer to inflammatory rheumatism. Before the action of salicylic acid and iodide of potassium in rheumatism was known, the patients were treated for a period of from four to six or more weeks with alkalies, then for a similar number of weeks with tonics, and if the case was successful, the patient was dismissed after three or four months, generally with a valvular lesion, as a *memento mori* for the rest of his days. A present, in the majority of cases, the patient is usually at work

inside of three weeks from date of attack, if properly treated. Thus one can readily compute the difference, both in direct expense, and from loss in business saved to the community in the treatment of this single disease. From the great number of cases of rheumatism monthly reported by the state board of health, which reports cover but a small fraction of the number of cases in the state, I am of the opinion that the people of this state save annually more from the progress in the treatment of this disease, than the entire university costs the state annually.

The profession, always mindful of her duty, is far from complaining, but nevertheless, she is fully conscious of the work done for the good of man, without money and without price, a work, which, in its grand aggregate, rises mountains high above all pecuniary computations. And to-day, as in the days of the Chamberlaines, she would point the finger of indignation and rightful scorn, on one who would withhold valuable knowledge for the sake of personal gain.

From these few facts of everyday observation, one beholds the intimate relation between the advancement of the medical profession, and the general welfare of the community. A relation, the advantages of which are so general, and so free as the blessings of heaven, that they are overlooked, and lo! behold! the profession must be charged with receiving *class favoritism* if the state, perchance, gives a few paltry dollars annually to the support of this department.

When every progress in medicine and surgery is directly accompanied with pecuniory savings to the sick; when with almost every step in preventative medicine the disease is either prevented or restricted in its ravages to the location of origin; when, with every step of progress in general medicine, the duration of a disease is shortened and the death rate lessened, and in surgery by means of antiseptics, inflammatory complications of septic origin almost completely avoided—all factors, forming in their grand aggregate a source of wealth to the state, which can be computed in dollars and cents—and when, then, in connection with these facts, it is borne in mind that the schools are, in the great majority of cases, the centers of this progress in medicine and surgery, then the charge of class favoritism must fall, for the state is annually receiving an income from the capital invested, which in its grand total rises far beyond all commercial computations, and the rate of which must increase in direct proportion to every progress made in the vast field of medicine and surgery.

No one will probably seriously question the right of the state to demand of those, in whose care the life of the citizen is so often placed, that they shall be possessed of such mental training as is essential for conducting logical thought, and that they shall be fully abreast with the general advancement of the science and art of medicine.

In my opinion a government which demands as thorough a training of the men who are to fight disease, as it demands of her soldiers, is giving the best possible protection to the citizen in times of peace, as well as in times of war. And, it is in those countries in which the training of the physician and surgeon is as rigid as that of the soldier, that medicine has developed her greatest achievements. European states demand this standard of their physicians and surgeons, and there we find the schools under state control, with one standard for all in the empire, the standard of the state examination.

In America, until recently there was no standard of professional training demanded by the state. Here the schools are under professional control, with well-nigh as many standards of qualification, both in matriculation and final examination, as there are schools in the land.

That our country has produced men, who have stood in their day, and those who stand to-day, second to none in their respective departments, is no argument in favor of the non-interference doctrine of the state in professional education. True genius, that is, hard systematic work, knows no bounds, and will throughout time rank with the great in the profession. But the great mass of the people must depend on the rank and file of the profession for medical services, and here it is not only the right, but the duty of the state to demand a thorough professional education, and an independent state examination, before the license to practice is granted. When the people have come to comprehend this fact, that their interests lie in a rigidly conducted medical education, and an independent state standard of qualification, it will not be long before American schools are fully abreast, in all departments, with the very best of Europe. The times are indicative of a gradual awakening of the people to their interests in medical affairs.

As the profession in the United States has so far had supreme control over the schools, that is, if the resolutions and demands of the county and state societies, and national association, as recorded from year to year in the transactions without power of enforcement, beyond the force of argument, can be designated with the word "control," then the people have not only the right, but in their interests it becomes an imperative duty to judge the competency of the profession to teach medicine by the proficiency of these schools, for it is far too frequently not merely a question of dollars and cents, but a question of life or death. This question has been thoroughly investigated by the Illinois State Board of Health, and the reports of this board speak a language that cannot be misunderstood,—they report a fact which the people will ere long comprehend in its full meaning.

According to these reports there are one hundred and sixteen medical schools in existence in the United States, and

eighty-eight schools have gone out of existence. Thus this country has had two hundred and four medical schools in a period of not over eighty years. This certainly shows great activity of some kind in medical circles, but this great activity is accompanied with some startling disclosures. Dr. E. Y. Nelson, of Delaware, Ohio, in a paper entitled "The Relation of the Literary to the Medical Colleges," printed in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Volume IV, page 255, states as follows: "Some months ago I received a letter from a warm, personal friend, himself a member of the Illinois State Board of Health, and the one to whom was committed much of the labor of compiling their report, though his name does not so appear. From him I obtained, as it were, an inside view of these matters, and gleaned certain facts not discernible in the published reports, at least not without much study and very careful comparisons. In the prosecution of their work they have found it necessary to adopt a schedule by which to grade the medical institutions of the country. According to that standard there are in the United States ten first-class medical colleges. A list of these accompanies the letter." And Dr. Nelson adds, that not one of these colleges is located within the border of the great state of Ohio.

In a quarterly report of April 16–17, 1885, kindly sent me by the Secretary, Dr. J. H. Rauch, I see the following statement: "Although seventy-eight medical colleges out of the one hundred and sixteen in the United States, claim to have exacted at their last session, a preliminary educational requirement as a condition of matriculation, the evidence afforded by the applications thus far received goes to show that in too many cases the standard of such education must be very low."

These reports of the Illinois State Board of Health unfold the deleterious result of leaving the medical education of the land solely in the hands of the profession, and that too in the case of a profession, which in the service of the government has reared a monument to medical and surgical science in her "Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion," which according to the German medical press, stands unsurpassed in the solid excellency of its every departure and improvements in the manifold conditions of war. And, understand, that the medical press of Germany renders this compliment after comparing the first volumes of the "Medical and Surgical History of the Franco-German War," with the American work.

I am not here to dwell on the etiology of this sad case of medical cachexia. I am here to defend in my humble way, both the state and my alma mater against an accusation which is false in principle, and against a doctrine which is pernicious in practice, alike, in its deleterious effects on the welfare of the general public, and the highest interests of the medical profes-

sion. A profession which in its every progress towards truth, works in the highest interest of the commonwealth, and which, in my opinion, should be carefully protected in its schools from the storms of adversity. Human nature will always remain true to its selfish instincts of promoting personal aggrandizement, and this powerful factor, uncontrolled in its sway, has exerted its baneful influence on the medical schools of our country, and thus, instead of being centers of learning and of original research, they have in too many instances become purely commercial concerns. In my opinion, the time has come when the people should call an imperative "Halt!" through legislation.

When comparing the record of the medical schools in the United States solely under professional control, minus the legal authority of enforcing demands, with the state schools of European countries, I cannot come to any other conclusion than that both the interests of the profession and of the people are best served with the schools under state control. The interests of the profession as I understand them, consist in the assurance that an adequate preliminary education is rigidly exacted of every matriculant, that the work of the school is thorough, and finally that the diploma is a guarantee of a successfully passed, rigid and exacting final examination in all branches of medicine and surgery. In a thoroughly equipped and rigidly conducted state school, these interests of the profession are under the control of the best medical and surgical talents obtainable, and the work is conducted uninfluenced by selfish considerations of whatever nature, beyond the requirements of science.

The governments of Europe and the advanced nations of other lands, have adhered to the experience of the hoary past in keeping the medical schools under state patronage and state control. The United States have departed from this path hitherto trodden by the nations and empires of historic time and left their medical schools solely under professional control and management. In the one case the schools have remained few in number, yet amply sufficient to supply all professional demands of the land, with a standard of qualification both for entrance and exit, which is fully abreast with the demands of the times. In these lands the schools are all centers of original research and investigation, centers of progress in the vast and ever widening domain of medicine.

In the United States, schools have sprung into existence with startling rapidity, and almost as many as now remain have gone out of existence, without having left a monument in the literature of medicine, of progress made in the advancement of medical science. The number of schools in our country cannot be far from the number of schools in all Europe. At the present rate of progress it will not be long before every one hundred

inhabitants in the land can have one doctor all to themselves to look after their precious health. When the standard of qualification and the original work of the schools, with some honorable exceptions, this department included, are compared with European schools under state control, every unprejudiced mind must come to the conclusion, that the medical history of the United States corroborates the experience of the ages in having the schools under state control in the interests of the people, and the profession; all sentimental vagaries of liberties guaranteed by the constitution notwithstanding.

Medicine, cosmopolitan as astronomy, when once understood in her direct bearing on the welfare of the people, that is, when the people of our country have come to comprehend the science and art of medicine, independent of the personality of the practitioner, will receive the same cordially offered royal support towards promoting her progress, as is offered by the nations of Europe, and the people will in turn demand practitioners trained to logical thought, and fully abreast with all her advancements. Then it will not be considered as a question of dollars and cents by the people when their attention is called to the needs of the schools, but as a question of principle in promoting that science which of all the sciences stands nearest to man.

In conclusion, I cannot refrain from giving public expression to some thoughts which have been far from pleasant to follow to their inevitable conclusions. From time to time I have read and listened to the sages and philosophers of our day, reviewing and analyzing existing forces, which with an unerring certainty are rapidly progressing toward a revolution, not simply directed against existing forms of government, but potent with destruction to civilization itself. Such forces can be met only by an education rounded in itself, and permeating the lowest depths of humanity. Of late years, and particularly during the last session of our state legislature, these sad thoughts have been aroused from time to time, as hundreds of thousands of dollars have been voted with a lavishness unparelleled in the history of our state, for supporting and educating the defective, demented and criminal classes, and the erection of grand piles for their domiciles. All this royal generosity granted by a legislature which was practically deaf towards the want of the University, and voted almost begrudgingly the bare necessity of the institution in the last days of its session.

Our constitution can only rest with safety on the intelligence of the nation, and the great practical education of the great masses can only be accomplished as long as the professions are composed of those who have sprung from the common people, and are still of the common people, blood of their blood, feeling and administering to their every want.

From causes, more or less directly traceable to the halls of

congress, and state legislatures, factors have arisen in the land, separating the people into two great classes, rich and poor. Now, let another factor arise, separating them into learned and ignorant, and you will inevitably have on the one hand the rich and educated, and on the other the poor and ignorant; but remember, that mighty force, which constitutes the arm of productive industry, knows full well the causes which have led to this deplorable state of affairs, and is fully conscious of its strength, irresistible when once organized.

Charity towards her wards is a noble attribute of a nation's character; a humane protection of her defective, demented and criminal classes is a high characteristic of an advanced civilization; yet when these dispensations of a state rise to royal munificence when compared with her support, granted almost grudgingly towards the pressing wants of her great University —that institution which of all institutions in the land, both represents and promotes the very principles on which the constitution of the nation was founded, and must rest throughout time—then it becomes high time to take a careful bearing of the course of the ship of state.